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ABSTRACT

A review of student development literature reveals that the goal of student affairs has changed from the mission of controlling and serving students to that of developing students. Implementing a residential life program grounded in student developmental strategies requires careful planning. Three developmental strategies incorporated with sound theoretical undergirding will provide optimum conditions for human development: milieu management, community development, and programming. Under the heading of milieu management, student development strategies include the comprehensive residence hall personalization programs which can be divided into three categories: (1) general freedom programs which allow for maximum initiative and creativity by students in personalizing space; (2) limited freedom programs which allow students to personalize residence halls on a limited basis; and (3) restricted freedom programs which allow for personalization using strict guidelines. A comprehensive action plan for intentional community development can result in a sense of group unity and shared responsibility. One approach to educational programming, programming for wellness, can facilitate change, growth, and development. The environment, community, and developmental programming are all change strategies which provide the basic structure for developing a successful residential program. (A detailed outline of the three strategies is included.) (NRB)

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UTILIZING STUDENT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP A RESIDENTIAL LIFE PROGRAM: A FORMULA

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UTILIZING STUDENT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP A RESIDENTIAL LIFE PROGRAM: A FORMULA

Are housing professionals really incorporating student development principles into their residential life programs? Many times, the intent is present but the manner of implementation is unclear and the use of such strategies never actually materializes. This paper will offer a formula for professionals to incorporate developmental strategies, which address the needs of the college student, into their respective residence hall programs. Strategies include: developing community, personalizing the environment, and programming with developmental concepts.

UTILIZING STUDENT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP A RESIDENTIAL LIFE PROGRAM: A FORMULA

Are housing professionals really incorporating student development principles into their residential life programs? A review of student development literature, as well as direction imparted from professional organizations, reveals that the goal of student affairs has changed from the mission of controlling and serving students to that of developing students. The goal is clear; however, the manner of accomplishing the goal is ambiguous as any issue our profession has ever faced. It is apparent that many residence hall professionals across the country are unsure of ways to organize their programs to meet the developmental needs of students. Furthermore, there is a dearth of programs that have a definite plan for utilizing developmental strategies.

Implementing a residential life program grounded in student developmental strategies is not a "hit or miss" proposition. Moreover, for this type of program to be accomplished, a definite "game plan" must be established and incorporated into the overall program of the housing division. Normally what happens is that we each find ourselves in the swamp, up to our necks in alligators (those administrative functions which must be accomplished) and tend to neglect the other aquatic creatures who are nibbling away at our appendages (those segments of our program which are given attention when all else is accomplished).

This plan must provide a formula for establishing and directing a residential life program that is striving not only to meet the students' needs (serving) but in maximizing the students' abilities to function at an optimum level (developing). This paper will discuss three developmental strategies that, when incorporated with sound theoretical undergirding, will provide optimum conditions for human development: milieu management, community, and programming (see App. I and II).

PROGRAM STRATEGY I: MILIEU MANAGEMENT

Of the three strategies, milieu management is least understood and therefore given the least attention by our profession. The French word milieu refers to the physical environment, the world in which the student lives. We as a profession have spent much time trying to manage a student's environment. These efforts have primarily been in the form of providing students with highly specialized programs and services. These programs have completely bypassed the physical and design dimensions of the student's individual environment. We have thrown the baby out with the bath-water. Abraham Maslow indicated to us how important the basics in life are in his "Hierarchy of Needs" writings. We have lost sight of his wisdom. Due to a lack of information on how the physical environment impacts the behavior of a person, administrators have chosen to pursue the safer programmatic areas. Efforts, therefore, to coordinate resources and design environments that will facilitate a developmental climate for growth are, for the most part, a red-headed stepchild in the family unit of strategies.

Many institutions continue to emphasize the complete control of residents in their living environment. It appears that many administrators, business officers, and physical plant personnel are unwilling to give certain freedoms to students. This is due in part to housing officers' lack of knowledge of workable change strategies. Primary to this endeavor must be our recognition of the importance of the physical environment as it influences the student's total development. With this in mind, resident educators should implement strategies to enhance the territorial behavior of residents.

One such strategy has been the development of a comprehensive residence hall personalization program. These programs primarily have allowed students to personalize their living environments. This has been accomplished by encouraging residents to paint, construct, or decorate in their primary space - individual rooms; secondary space - hallways; and group space - lounges, stairwells and activity rooms. In order to meet the basic needs of students, programs have been implemented by way of espousing such statements to residents as:

> "Freedom to personalize! Wherever you live, it is important to have a place where you can be yourself - a place you want to be. The Department of Residential Life realizes this and therefore permits an even encourages residents to personalize and control their living space to a high level of freedom within predetermined institutional guidelines. Furthermore, we recognize that room personalization can provide a warm comfortable environment conducive to relaxation and greater effectiveness in personal and academic development. We hope that you will utilize this program to meet your needs."

Residence hall personalization programs have been implemented in varying degrees. Based upon a study of personalization program guidelines, programs can be divided into three categories:

General Freedom programs allow for maximum initiative and creativity by students in personalizing space. Included in this category are those programs at institutions which encourage multi-colored graphics and murals in both rooms and public space. Paint is offered in a variety of colors at no cost to residents and can be ordered for each room usually once a year. In addition, many institutions have permitted the construction of furniture (i.e., lofts, bunks) under prescribed safety regulations. Paneling in rooms, lounges and study areas as well as wall decorations (i.e., nets, cork boards, sports equipment, etc.) are allowed.

Limited Freedom programs allow students to personalize residence hall space but on a more limited basis. Residents are furnished a specified choice of paint colors and are not allowed to paint without prior approval of a predetermined residence hall staff member. Public space can be painted, preferably in solid colors; in many instances, however, graphics are allowed upon prior approval of design. In some cases, rooms can be painted every year but more often, only every other year. Many institutions allow construction of lofts and bunks.

Restricted Freedom programs allow for personalization utilizing much stricter guidelines. A very limited number of paint colors are allowed, sometimes only two. Rooms can be painted in a single color, or for contrast, one wall can be painted in a coordinated color to match the remaining walls. Rooms can be painted no more than once every other year and public areas are painted only by the institution. Some institutions allow the construction of bunks and lofts on a limited basis.

Research conducted by the Territoriality Task Force of the American College Personnel Association, Commission III (Student Residence Program) on personalization programs indicates that the concept of implied ownership is accomplished by affording students the opportunity to personalize and control their living space. Residents develop an allegiance to their living areas and become protective of the territory they helped create through the expenditure of their own time and effort in creating a personalized environment. Additional multi-campus studies indicate that increased student satisfaction, retention, growth and interaction, together with reduced damanges and roommate conflicts, are outcomes experienced in varying degrees by institutions which have implemented personalization programs.

A very comprehensive explanation of the aforementioned program and research is described in The Territorial Workshop Package: A Practitioner's Approach to Understanding and Implementing a Residence Hall Personalization Program.

PROGRAM STRATEGY II: COMMUNITY

A review of residential life publications and articles indicates that community development is a major component among those strategies used by residence hall personnel to foster the individual development of students. There appears to be a great deal of agreement as to the fact that group building on individual living units is imperative if we, as resident educators, expect to having housing programs which assist residents in functioning at

optimum levels. We therefore must fully recognize that a person's living unit can have a profound impact on his or her behavioral development. Some of the outcomes of striving toward group unity on a residence hall floor are: the establishment of relationships, the development of shared goals and purpose, increased communication, mutual support, collective problem solving and decision making, positive conflict resolution, group identity, and interdependence. It is apparent that establishing community is essential for the creation of a housing program grounded in student development principles. The question, then, is not if we need to employ group building as a major developmental strategy, but rather how to do so.

The divergency in determining and implementing a single definition of student development hardly exceeds the lack of agreement and continuity in establishing a format for group development. It is apparent that there are a multitude of residential life programs that have failed to develop a viable plan for directing and assisting staff in developing floor units toward a sense of community. This can even be witnessed on the same campus. In other words, building staffs as close to one another as across the street can utilize different philosophies and patterns for establishing "group." The results of this "hit and miss" approach indicate that we should develop a sense of continuity and intentionality in our plans. Moreover, we must develop specific strategies that, when implemented, will result in specific behaviors.

Recognizing the above, the upper level staff at Stetson University has developed a comprehensive action plan for intentional community development. This plan, when utilized with an undergirding of group theory, has been extremely successful. Its success can, to a large degree, be attributed to the definite

direction (game plan) that it provides for the staff to follow. The action plan is summarized below.

INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: ACTION PLAN

Goal - Developing community in residence hall floors.

Objective I - Help residents get to know one another.

Steps for Accomplishing the Objective

1. Initiate casual interaction (i.e., eat at Commons, rap sessions, Stetson University activities)
2. Lead initial floor meeting (see Staff Manual for instructions)
3. Introduce residents' similarities (i.e., surfing, tennis, frisbee, etc.)

Objective II - Promote a sense of group unity

Steps for Accomplishing the Objective

1. Select a group name.
2. Order items with the group name (i.e., shirts, jerseys, hats, etc.
3. Paint the hallway and develop a logo for posting (i.e., Lower 8)
4. Print a section in the residence hall newsletter
5. Introduce floor competition (i.e., backgammon, ping pong)
6. Participate in intramurals as a team
7. Establish routine activities (i.e., General Hospital, Hill Street Blues, sports, etc.)

Objective III - Encourage student input in matters pertaining to the floor

Steps for Accomplishing the Objective

1. Prepare an interest survey for floor
2. Never plan alone - brainstorm as a group, use ideas of past programs, question and listen

Objective IV - Program to meet floor members' interests and needs

Steps for Accomplishing the Objective:

1. Organize with students a floor project the first week - utilize floor funds
2. Within the third week, plan and implement an educational project

Objective V - Establish mutual expectations among floor members

Steps for Accomplishing the Objective:

1. At first floor meeting, discuss: ideas of living together, go over and discuss residential life guidelines.
2. Initiate discussion for developing individual and group standards of behavior (in one week):
   - noise level
   - quiet hours
   - damages
3. Be fair and consistent in enforcing policies for all residents.
4. Encourage openness among residents.
5. Be a good role model.

PROGRAM STRATEGY III: PROGRAMMING

Programming for the needs of students is one of the most universal aspects of any residence hall program and deemed most valuable in supplementing the total collegiate learning experience. But, what is programming? How are staff trained to program effectively? What model is best suited for a campus directing programming efforts? The goal of this segment is to outline specific strategies which will provide programming direction for staff, diversify types of programs sponsored by staff and students, and increase total campus involvement in program participation. Its purpose is to discuss a specific approach to educational programming -

programming for wellness - and to stimulate ideas which will cause programming to become an educational experience which will facilitate change, growth, and development in students.

I. Residence Hall Staff Training

Programming in the residence halls can only be as successful as the students who initiate the programming efforts. The students who initiate the programming efforts (that is, the residence hall staff members) can only be as effective as the training program that introduces them to the supporting concepts. Therefore, adequate training in regard to a model for programming is imperative. The model adapted by the Department of Residential Life at Stetson University was developed at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, and is composed of six dimensions: social, emotional, physical, vocational, spiritual and intellectual.

The student staff members are introduced to the model by small groups rotating through six modules. Each module has three components: (1) definition of the wellness dimension; (2) brainstorm and discussion of various programs which would address that dimension; and (3) an appropriate experiential exercise which involves the participants. This aspect of training occurs during the Fall comprehensive staff training program, prior to the beginning of the upcoming academic year.

After the initial introduction, Resident Advisors are given a self-scoring wellness assessment entitled "Testwell", which can be purchased from the Institute for Lifestyles, University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point. They are assigned to a Head Resident or Area Coordinator ("mentor") who discusses the assessment with the Resident Advisor. After the comprehensive discussion, which includes an assessment of the Resident Advisor's standing in each wellness dimension, the

Resident Advisor develops a set of goals which will address the strengthening of a deficient dimension or dimensions. Periodic meetings are encouraged in an effort to support the staff member in the accomplishment of identified goals.

II. Residence Hall Programming Strategies

After familiarizing the residence hall staff with the Wellness model and appropriate supporting concepts, they begin to develop strategies for introducing their hall members to Wellness. Wellness brochures, which introduce the model, are placed in each student's room. Staff members are encouraged to sponsor a program, presented by an upper-level administrator, which discusses the basic Wellness model, explains what wellness means for each individual, and provides students with a variety of ways in which they can develop their individual wellness. An abbreviated wellness assessment is administered to floor members and a goal sheet is completed. This effort has a dual purpose. It introduces the holistic health/wellness concept to residents and stimulates their involvement by assessing each individual's current needs in a variety of areas.

Based on informal sharing on the aforementioned assessment, Resident Advisors have a basis for working with students to develop programs for the hall. Resident Advisors are required to develop and implement two social and two educational (any program in the remaining five dimensions) programs during any given Semester. Completed hall programs are recorded on Program Evaluation Cards, which are collected by each Resident Advisor's supervisor and evaluated during an individual meeting between the Resident Advisor and respective Head Resident.

Each month, the Assistant Director of Residential Life for Staff and Student Development compiles a list of all completed programs and organizes the list by wellness dimension addressed.

Finally, a Spring Semester staff in-service session is devoted to the total floor assessment by the Resident Advisors. Resident Advisors are divided into small groups and given a list of evaluative questions which assist them in reviewing the total wellness of their individual floor unit.

III. Involving the Total Campus

Although the Wellness movement at Stetson was initially introduced by the Department of Residential Life, one department cannot succeed in involving a total campus community. Support from other departments is imperative. The Student Health Service and the Physical Education Department have been invaluable supporting agents as they gave input into total campus programming ideas and strategies.

Two major programs have been implemented on the Stetson University campus to involve the total campus community. "Body Talk" Week was sponsored by the Department of Residential Life, Physical Education, and the Health Service. The Student Union Building Lobby was arranged to accommodate twenty "self-assessment" stations which included: drinking lifestyle assessment, flexibility, cardio-vascular strength, hearing, sight, etc., and the Red Cross assisted in diabetes and blood pressure screenings. A free aerobics class was given, an introduction to the use of Nautilus equipment was provided, and a fad-diet seminar was presented during the week of activity. This program gave individuals the opportunity to assess their physical wellness and to develop strategies for physical improvement.

To provide faculty and staff members an opportunity to participate in Wellness activities, the "Brown Bag Seminar Series" was developed. These seminars are offered from noon until 1:30 p.m. once a month and release-time from offices is given to those who are interested in participating. Topics include: Assertiveness, a Diet Workshop, Time Management, Stress Management, and Nautilus Workout Introduction. Seminars are limited to twenty participants and have received an overwhelming response. These seminars are valuable to participants because they assist faculty and staff in developing new skills or reinforcing strategies to which they may have previously been introduced. Faculty and staff then contribute to the campus Wellness program by being good role models for the student body as well as being better prepared to assist students in understanding Wellness.

These strategies are only an example of what Stetson University has done to introduce Wellness to the campus. The list of ideas is endless. The Wellness movement at Stetson University is beginning to make a definite mark on the lives of students, faculty and staff in a variety of ways.

The environment, community and developmental programming are all change strategies which provide the basic structure for developing a successful residential program. If our residents are going to be afforded optimum opportunities to grow as persons, we must develop and implement these programs with intentionality. These concepts are essential to the enterprise of residence education.

A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF PROGRAM DIRECTION

I. To develop and promote a residential life program that has as its goal the development of students by way of intentional developmental strategies.

Concepts to operationalize utilizing intentional developmental strategies:

A. Milieu Management Strategies

(1) Territoriality - the personalization of:

(a) Primary Territority - Individual Rooms

(b) Secondary Territory - Hallways

(c) Group Space - Public Spaces

(2) Programming for Interests/Zoning for Behaviors (based on needs assessment of residential populations)

(a) Recreation Facilities

(b) Study Rooms

(c) Group Lounges

(d) Outdoor Program Facilities

(e) Auto Mechanics Area

(f) Cook-out/Picnic Areas

B. Community Development Strategies

(1) Ways of Deveoping Unification of Residents on Individual Floor Units (Group Building)

(a) Floor Projects - Educational/Social

(b) Room Personalization

(c) Recreational Programs - Intramurals and Floor Competition

(d) Develop and Implement Group Guidelines of Behavior

(e) University/Community Service Projects

C. Programming Strategies

(1) Programming with developmental concepts

(a) Implement programs that address specific components of supporting Wellness model: spiritual (Bible study); emotional (stress); vocational (resume writing); etc.

(b) Conduct Interest Seminars to address identified needs (Assertiveness, Time Management)

(c) Comprehensive Recreation Programs

(d) Promote Annual Events

II. To work with staff members in a consultant and collaborative role in order to assist them in understanding and operationalizing developmental concepts.

Conduct seminars and workshops dealing with:

A. Understanding the role of staff members

B. Direction and skill acquisition to incoroporate developmental strategies (i.e., need assessments, territoriality, group building program)

C. Developing counseling skills

III. Program Evaluation

A. Evaluate Director/Assistant Directors/Area Coordinators/Head Residents/ Resident Advisors

B. Develop research programs on student life and residence hall programs impact

A SYNOPSIS OF GOALS (LONG RANGE AIMS)

DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A SOUND PHYSICAL PLANT WITH ZERO BASE EXPENDITURES FOR DAMAGES

INCORPORATE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT AT ALL LEVELS

DEVELOP SMOOTH FRONT OFFICE OPERATIONS

INTERFACE WITH TOTAL CAMPUS COMMUNITY

PROACTIVE RESIDENCE HALL MODEL

SOUND PHYSICAL PLANT AND SMOOTH PROGRAM OPERATION + STAFF TRAINING GROUNDED IN INTENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES = STUDENT DEVELOPMENT = STUDENT SATISFACTION = HIGH RATE OF RETENTION = QUALITY RESIDENCE HALL PROGRAM.

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